



# The Minstrel

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
CREATIVE AND LITERARY ARTS  
WINTER 2015

# Slow

Thank you for picking up this edition of The Minstrel. The theme for this edition is "Slow". Our community has gathered works that come from times of letting life slow down. May these pieces help you catch your breath, slow down your pace and reflect on the simplest pleasures that come from being aware in the moment.

Jennifer Hoogsteen  
Kayla Nielsen





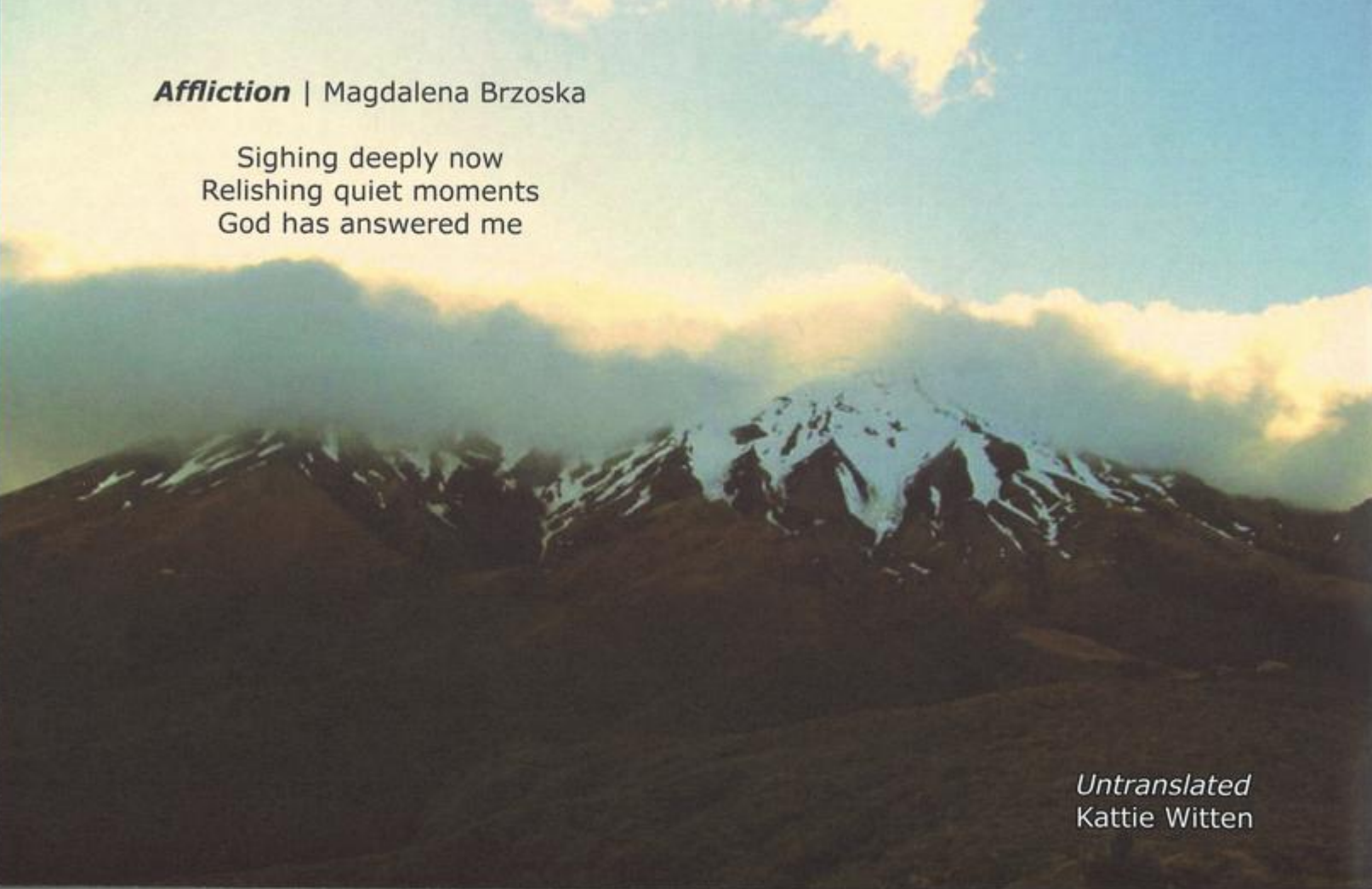
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***Affliction*** | Magdalena Brzoska

Sighing deeply now  
Relishing quiet moments  
God has answered me

*Untranslated*  
Kattie Witten

## **Hymn** | Amy Wiseman

i remember how good the ocean felt  
the salty air filled my lungs  
my body tingled with this new intake of oxygen  
the sand was speckled with shells and  
broken glass  
i only took notice of the softness between  
my toes  
the land surrounding me was welcoming  
and strange  
the mountains were like words of a foreign  
language  
that i was determined to understand  
never had i seen a world like it  
photographs can't do it justice  
but they do help me to remember  
the days spent in awe of creation  
when my spirit was so full  
that i sang constantly  
my wanderlust was God-breathed  
my Guide has a firm grip  
i've tried to loosen my hand from His  
only to be lost in a desert without  
water or shade

i don't know how to read a compass  
we traverse the hills together  
i see the grass filled with flowers  
the endless vineyards in the distance  
i am outside of myself here  
every step feels heavy  
as if i would eventually sink into the scenery  
from these hills and mountains i smell the  
salt of the ocean  
i see the clouds fill with colours i didn't  
know existed  
i couldn't speak  
all that left my lips were songs that  
wove into the wind  
my eyes produced a rain storm  
the water fed my feet as the deep roots they  
had become  
my hands warm from being wrapped in  
those of my Guide  
held high above my head like  
branches on a tree  
a permanent stance of praise





***Little Glories*** | Laura Heming

I am about seventy something away from  
some sort of home.  
At least that is seventy something  
thoughts away from what  
I had hoped,  
that something would burn,  
Sweet smoke signals to lead me to  
some sort of,  
Some shape of,  
Some  
Web, already spun.  
The thrash that I feel in the final  
day-mornings,  
The one on my insides, and outside my smile

Today it pecks with soft tones of a friend  
Who left with some sort of hitchhiker's sack,  
With all essentials in tow.  
I am about seventy something at the time  
that I finally  
Take that walk to a home I've  
painted some time ago.  
Seventy steps and I see the red bird  
chase the blue,  
The smoke signal fills my lungs with  
Some sort of familiar, dark tone.  
Keep to your singing  
blue bird,  
I am some kind of home.

*the in between*  
Kayla Nielsen

***On What is Left*** | Nathan Brink

I lie in bed on winter's night and stare  
at shadows cast against the plaster wall,  
I think on what is left in life to care.

The sounds outside, a car's loud honk to dare  
to break my silent, subtle, inward fall;  
I lie on bed on winter's night and stare.

The morning dread, when life has lost all flair,  
waits for the dawn that comes  
at toddler's crawl,  
I think on what is left in life to care.

My bed feels cold without the space to share,  
your pillow blank, the sheets too wide a pall,  
I lie in bed on winter's night and stare.

I miss the scent of breakfast in the air,  
and from downstairs I almost hear your call,  
I think on what is left in life to care.

The day awaits; I rise, and breathe, prepare  
to face a world where sickness can befall.  
I lie in bed on winter's night and stare,  
and think on what is left in life to care.

*Be Still*

Jessica Puddicombe  
Acrylic paint, ink, duct  
tape on cardboard





be STILL...



*Love Eternal*  
Alicia Hampton  
Watercolour  
and ink

***Press Pause*** | Nathan Brink

Where did all the people go?  
We've all been left alone,  
Forgotten flesh makes time move slow  
Within our minds and phones.

The great unknown is out there still,  
we've left it all behind  
Of doubts and fear we've had our fill  
of pains within the mind.

We do not look up to the skies  
And see the stars above  
We've lost the spark of lively eyes  
And lost the strength to love.

Press pause and make our time move slow,  
and look at what's unknown  
Ask where did all the people go,  
and why we're so alone.

***Je t'aimerai toujours*** | Charles Bryan

Dew sparkles,  
As days first light graces  
An eastern meadow.  
Bud to blossom

I become still  
And warm.  
In stillness the light is lost  
By the shadow of your smile.

As the poetry of life leaves  
And my painting changes hue -  
I am unappeased.  
Where is that worn out wish?

Brushing back the cypress branches,  
Bluebirds cry out  
In recollection:  
The cold didn't leave by summer

Slow  
The worlds colliding  
I find  
You

Water.  
Stars burning.  
I find You.

There is a free fall  
I have found  
at the edge of  
the Violent waves

There is a strangeness  
like typewriter

words  
Ink.  
Smoke.

The books sit.  
The shelves collect dust.  
I sit {in}  
The old chair  
Holding moments in time

The shore is there.

There is a free fall I have found  
At the edge of the Violent waves  
I find You.

*Peace*  
Jessica Puddicombe  
Acrylic paint





*Small*  
Michelle VanderSpek



***Listen*** | Carly Ververs

An ocean of emotions and thoughts  
Crashing over me  
Drowning out Your voice  
I hear something  
Words caught in the wind  
What were they?  
I need to hear Your voice  
I want to know it  
Like the back of my hand  
So, God, won't You still this sea  
Calm these waves?  
Quiet my heart, O Lord,  
So that I may hear You speak  
After a time the sea stills  
And the waves calm  
I'm left before You, silent  
You speak again  
A single word, not lost in the wind:  
"Listen."

***Yellow Kayak*** | Katie Witten

You sat behind me in the yellow tandem kayak,  
and we set forth on a sea as calm  
as your eyelids when you sleep  
in the sun.

You never learned to steer – no one kayaks where you're from;  
so I took the lead and tried to get us to the island,  
an attempt soon made useless  
when the storm targeted us – only us,  
I swear, on that open sea.

Storms hit from every angle every hour  
on that sliver of a country, never with forewarning.

The waves grew sharper all around us –  
a thousand unseen diamond stones,  
honing jagged dagger waves  
that would slice our sides like rocks  
if we tipped this time around.

Then the clouds gave up and lost it;  
I looked back to see your shirt now four  
shades darker, glued to the  
frame of your body.

You looked back at me, your mouth a morning  
stretching sunrise, breaking over slopes of teeth

as you burst into hysteria  
uncontainable I was  
joining your polyphony.  
Our stomachs were ripping, til we snapped in half from  
the hilarity – by then we'd both stopped paddling,  
our undecided caving  
surrender to the sea  
as we flipped that golden moonbeam  
on its front. We hit the spongy bottom –  
salty sloshes met our mouths, gasping  
we found a way to stand.  
I looked back to see you spit out sand and salt;  
tangled seaweed wreathed your hair.  
And all that time we had only spoken smirks  
and glowing half-moons from our mouths.  
Never words, but rather your laughter –  
its flight, floating lightly  
against plunging nails  
of rain,  
followed by its weightiness –  
dwelling still within me,  
twelve months anchored  
to this day.

\*\*\*



Eight months after, back home,  
in this stretching breadth of a  
country; he sits behind me  
in the charcoal tandem kayak.  
We both were taught to paddle  
long before we could speak in  
sentences. Two mariner masters,  
educated; world at the tips of our  
stale, grasping fingers. "Where to?"  
he asks the ridges of my spine,  
poking under cotton, dry, two feet  
ahead in this crammed restricting  
crescent. But I am silent as the water  
on this windless afternoon. We have  
nowhere to go. No thick rope  
of direction pulling us away  
from home. We were taught  
to steer words before we could  
walk. But our mouths are flat;  
planks of hardwood. They won't  
bend. They can't snap.

***Arboreal Advantage***  
Aaron Timothy Wilkinson

In winter I seem dead.  
In summer I seem still.  
In springtime I begin to stir  
But then in fall seem ill.

Watch me for an hour,  
I won't seem to move  
But look how tall I've grown and I'll  
Have nothing left to prove.

***Guardian Angel*** | Magdalena Brzoska

Time keeps marching on  
Keeping me safe from above  
From your soul to mine

Today I dusted the knickknacks on the shelf,  
all caked in dust and traces of cobwebs.  
A delicate figurine had my full attention:  
Rose, a Southern Belle in a crinkly red  
marble dress  
with tawny hair and faded blue eyes.  
Every time I paid a visit, those faded eyes  
would watch from her pedestal; the side  
table.  
A woman who believed she would live forever,  
elegant once with long chestnut hair.  
She reminded me of you.  
You were step, though still called grandma.  
Haven't forgotten that potent,  
eye-watering fragrance  
you once wore called wild rose

Was it meant to conceal the musk  
of decaying cinders  
from your cigarette ends?  
Maybe the aroma of chocolate from imported  
éclairs?  
Remember the crystal chandelier  
that dangled above the mahogany  
dining table?  
Your melodious laugh when my small  
fingers traced  
rainbows on the pale green walls. I loved it.  
Today I dusted all the knickknacks  
on the shelf;  
four years passed, but the memories of you  
won't fade.

*Wish*  
Michelle VanderSpek



## ***The Transcendent Insight of the Realist Tortoise***

Aaron Timothy Wilkinson

There was once a different Tortoise and a different Hare.  
They heard the tired fable and repeated the affair.  
The Hare resolved to not be lax or take the time to rest.  
He finished first and all the other creatures named him best.

The Tortoise never crossed the line, he was not seen again.  
He found a quiet lake to rest and read during the rain.  
Slow and steady never wins, the thought is clear insanity,  
But this does not disappoint those who know the race is vanity.

